

NBPTS[®]

National Board for
Professional Teaching Standards

CHOOSING EXCELLENCE: NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

Q & A Guide for Teachers and Other Educators

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Pictured on the cover of this brochure is Andrew Johnson, a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) who teaches history at Chicago Academy High School. The images on the cover depict the connection between teaching practice and reflection — a process that helps NBCTs improve their classroom skills and their impact on student achievement and learning.

Established and administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Board Certification is a voluntary assessment program designed to develop, recognize and retain our nation's most accomplished teachers and improve overall teacher effectiveness. Most teachers who have completed the process, whether they achieve certification or not, tell us that it is the best professional development they have ever experienced.

National Board Certified Teachers have a unique and influential voice in this country. In June 2008, the National Research Council (NRC) affirmed that National Board Certification has had a positive impact on student achievement, teacher retention and professional development. In the most rigorous and comprehensive study to date about National Board Certification, the NRC found that students taught by National Board Certified Teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than students taught by teachers who are not board certified.

We invite you to join the ranks of the thousands of National Board Certified Teachers who help students develop the skills necessary to thrive in school, in the workplace and in the 21st century global economy. We hope that you will encourage your colleagues to do the same.



Joseph A. Aguerrebere, Ed.D.
President and CEO

COVER PHOTO: Andrew Johnson, NBCT, Chicago, Ill.
(Photo courtesy of NBPTS)

MAKE THE COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPLISHED TEACHING: BECOME A NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHER

Are there National Board Certified Teachers in your school? If so, join them and teachers nationwide who have taken their careers to the next level. If there are no NBCTs in your school, be the first.

National Board Certification is part of the growing education reform movement that is advancing student learning, improving teaching and making schools better. Teachers who achieve National Board Certification have met high standards through study, expert evaluation, self-assessment and peer review.

District and state officials know NBCTs make a positive difference in student learning. They also know NBCTs are powerful teacher leaders who help advance agendas for school improvement.

A Congressionally-mandated report by the highly respected National Research Council found that National Board Certification has a positive impact on student achievement, teacher retention and professional development.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards invites you to support or join the ranks of the nation's most accomplished teachers who help students develop the skills necessary to thrive in school, in the workplace and in the 21st century global economy.

National Board Certification

- **Strengthens practice.** Research shows candidates demonstrate significant improvement in their teaching practice. Teachers who achieve certification have been assessed against the nation's highest advanced teaching standards.
- **Helps students succeed.** Research documents that students taught by NBCTs make higher gains on achievement tests than students taught by non-NBCTs.
- **Demonstrates leadership skills.** In a 2007 study, 80 percent of NBCTs say other educators look to them for leadership, mentoring and coaching.
- **Helps expand influence and expertise.** Research reports that many NBCTs positively impact curricular decisions, chair departments and serve as faculty voices to policymakers and other stakeholders.
- **Advances careers.** Certification provides routes for NBCTs to advance as master teachers, school leaders and mentors without leaving the classroom.
- **Provides portability.** Many states recognize National Board Certification as sufficient proof for state licensure, allowing movement from state to state.
- **Offers higher salary potential.** Many states and hundreds of local districts offer salary incentives for teachers who certify.
- **Enhances education.** Certification contributes to Continuing Education Units. Many higher-education institutions give NBCTs graduate credits for completing National Board Certification.



Q: What Is National Board Certification?

A: National Board Certification is an advanced teaching credential. It complements, but does not replace, a state's teacher license. It is valid for 10 years, and renewal candidates must begin the renewal process during their eighth or ninth years as NBCTs.

National Board Certification is achieved upon successful completion of a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize effective and accomplished teachers who meet high standards based on what teachers should know and be able to do. National Board Certification is available nationwide for most preK–12 teachers.

As part of the certification process, candidates complete 10 assessments that are reviewed by trained teachers in their certificate areas. The assessments include four portfolio entries that feature teaching practice and six constructed response exercises that assess content knowledge.

"National Board Certification is a journey. The process provided a clear benchmark for focusing in on a child's needs and the resources that provided what I needed as an educator."

— June Teisan, NBCT
2008 Michigan
Teacher of the Year

Q: How Does NBPTS Support NBCTs Throughout Their Careers?

A: NBPTS recognizes that NBCTs are powerful teacher leaders who have an influential voice in education. To ensure NBCTs have ongoing support throughout their careers, NBPTS provides resources, information and opportunities via

- **NBCTLink** — the online community that connects NBCTs who want to share classroom experiences; exchange information about best teaching practices, technology and methods to improve student learning; and discuss opinions about education-related topics. (www.nbctlink.org)
- **AdvocacyLink** — the NBPTS legislative action center that provides up-to-date news about education issues in Congress and state governments, and gives constituents the opportunity to volunteer to contact policymakers and media to positively impact education policy. (www.capwiz.com/nbpts/home)
- **Accomplished Teacher® by SmartBrief** — a free, weekday daily news summary focused on accomplished teaching for NBCTs, candidates, potential candidates and other NBPTS stakeholders. In addition to a summary of teacher-focused news from newspapers across the country, "Accomplished Teacher" includes specific information about National Board Certification, NBCTs and the National Board. (www.smartbrief.com/nbpts)

Additionally:

- NBPTS provides direct opportunities for NBCTs to participate as National Board assessors, candidate support providers, outreach and recruitment liaisons and advisors.
- NBPTS shares with NBCTs opportunities from other professional organizations that wish to use National Board Certified Teachers' knowledge and skills to further other teaching-related initiatives and projects.

Q: Why Standards for Accomplished Teaching?

A: Every child deserves an accomplished teacher — one who is qualified to equip students with the skills to succeed in the 21st century global community. NBPTS Standards and National Board Certification give teachers and schools the tools to define and measure teaching excellence. NBPTS Standards are based on the Five Core Propositions that form the foundation for what all accomplished teachers should know and be able to do and provide a reference that helps educators link teaching standards to teaching practice.

Five Core Propositions

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.



"National Board Certified Teachers have more than skill and knowledge."

They have a passion to be better at what they do."

**— Jodi Kimizuka, NBCT
Washington**



CERTIFICATES

Art

Early and Middle Childhood
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

Career and Technical Education

Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

English as a New Language

Early and Middle Childhood
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

English Language Arts

Early Adolescence
Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Exceptional Needs Specialist

Early Childhood through Young Adulthood

Generalist

Early Childhood
Middle Childhood

Health Education

Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

Library Media

Early Childhood through Young Adulthood

Literacy:

Reading – Language Arts

Early and Middle Childhood

Mathematics

Early Adolescence
Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Music

Early and Middle Childhood
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

Physical Education

Early and Middle Childhood
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

School Counseling

Early Childhood through Young Adulthood

Science

Early Adolescence
Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Social Studies – History

Early Adolescence
Adolescence and Young Adulthood

World Languages Other Than English

Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

Developmental Age Categories: Early Childhood = Ages 3-8; Middle Childhood = Ages 7-12; Early and Middle Childhood = Ages 3-12; Early Childhood through Young Adulthood = Ages 3-18+; Early Adolescence = Ages 11-15; Adolescence and Young Adulthood = Ages 14-18+; Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood = Ages 11-18+

Q: What Are the Standards and Certificate Areas?

A: NBPTS developed standards for accomplished teaching in 16 different subject areas with students at various developmental levels. These standards were developed and validated by representative committees comprised of master teachers, disciplinary organizations and other education experts. Many school systems use the standards as the basis for ongoing teacher and school counselor professional development, and many colleges and universities incorporate them into their undergraduate and graduate teacher-education programs.

Based on these standards, NBPTS offers 25 certificates that are applicable to most teachers in American schools. For more information, see the chart on page 6 of this brochure or visit www.nbpts.org/become_a_candidate/available_certificates1.

Q: What Is Required of Candidates?

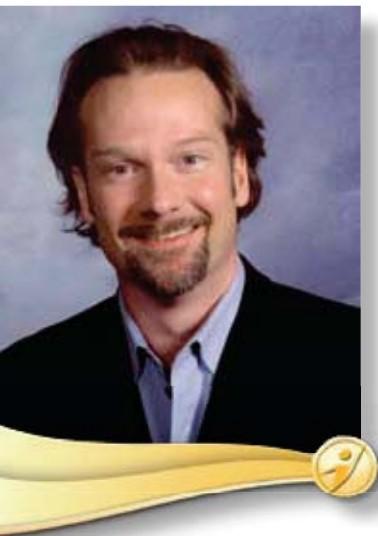
A: The NBPTS certification process may take from one to three years to complete. Throughout this period, candidates become familiar with the standards for their certificate areas, review their content to prepare for assessment center exercises and evaluate their teaching practices as they prepare their portfolio entries. Specifically, candidates submit the following components for scoring:

- Analysis of and reflection on student learning based on small and large group work with students that is supported by video recordings of classroom teaching (two portfolio entries)
- Analysis of and reflection on student learning using student work samples (one portfolio entry)
- Documented accomplishments of working with families and the community, colleagues and the profession and evidence of how that work impacts student learning (one portfolio entry)
- Responses to online assessment exercises that demonstrate subject-matter expertise (six 30-minute constructed response exercises scheduled at a computer-based assessment center)



"National Board Certification is more than a title. It symbolizes that a teacher has met the nation's highest standards in the teaching profession. Board certification gives teachers a sense of empowerment that is felt not only by themselves but by the students they serve."

***— Peggy Brookins, NBCT
Florida***



"The National Board Certification process taught me to think outside the box. To this day, I have not found a professional development program or any process in the education community that rivals the National Board. Nothing comes close."

**— Lewis Chappelar, NBCT
2008 California
Teacher of the Year**

Q: How Are Candidates Assessed?

A: NBPTS uses proven protocols to train experienced classroom teachers and school counselors as NBPTS assessors. The assessors teach subjects and developmental levels that relate to the certificate areas they are assessing. Assessors who successfully complete the training score the candidates' submissions (portfolio entries and computer-based assessment center exercises) to determine whether these responses meet the applicable standards. Each assessor scores only a portion of a candidate's submission, and a certain percentage of entries are scored independently by two different assessors. This ensures that each candidate's work is reviewed by multiple assessors.

Q: What Help Is Available to Candidates?

A: NBPTS works to ensure that candidates are never alone as they go through the certification process. The NBPTS Web site is a gateway to extensive resources, including portfolio guidelines, assessment center exercise instructions, tutorials and scoring guides. In addition, NBPTS provides access to a network of Candidate Support Providers — NBCTs, higher education institutions and others who provide support programs for candidates for National Board Certification. In addition, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association offer "A Candidate Guide to National Board Certification." For more information, contact your local union or state affiliate. NBPTS also offers *Take One!*, which can be used as an initial step in becoming a candidate for National Board Certification. More information about *Take One!* is available on page 14 of this brochure and at www.nbpts.org/takeone.

Q: How Much Does It Cost?

A: The assessment fee is \$2,500, which includes a nonrefundable fee of \$500. In addition, there is a nonrefundable \$65 processing charge due at the time of application.

Q: What Financial Assistance Is Available for Candidates?

A: Although many teachers and school counselors invest in National Board Certification as their career development choice, full or partial financial support is often available to help many candidates pay the assessment fee. The following are examples of financial support options that may be available to candidates.

- **Candidate Subsidy Program**

Partial financial support is available in every state through the Candidate Subsidy Program. Made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the program provides funds to a number of candidates in each state to help offset assessment fees. To qualify for this fee support, candidates must contact their state subsidy administrators to ensure compliance with state registration requirements. Information about the Candidate Subsidy Program is available at www.nbpts.org/resources/state_local_information.

- **State and Local Incentives**

Many states and districts offer support for candidates and/or salary incentives for those who achieve certification. For information about state and local support incentives, visit www.nbpts.org/resources/state_local_information.

- **The National Board Scholarship Program**

NBPTS offers a limited number of scholarships to teachers seeking National Board Certification through the National Board Scholarship Program. Scholarships are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis to teachers who have submitted their candidate applications and have paid the nonrefundable \$500 initial fee. Information about the National Board Scholarship Program is available at www.nbpts.org/become_a_candidate/fees_financial_support/scholarships and 1-888-908-FEES. Applicants are encouraged to consider state- and local-specific deadlines.

Please note limited scholarships are available. NBPTS respectfully requests that only candidates with significant financial needs or those that would undergo a significant financial hardship apply for scholarships.

- **Extended Payment Options by E-Check**

NBPTS offers a flexible payment plan that allows first-time candidates to pay assessment fees by electronic check. Candidates using this option can extend payments until mid-March. Candidates will be allowed to decide on the due date of each monthly installment, and NBPTS will send a monthly e-mail reminder regarding payment.



"I think that having so many teachers seeking National Board [Certification] has changed the [school] culture because everybody wants to achieve more."

— Lita Kelly, Principal
Maryland



PROCESS FOR FIRST TIME NATIONALLY CERTIFIED TEACHERS

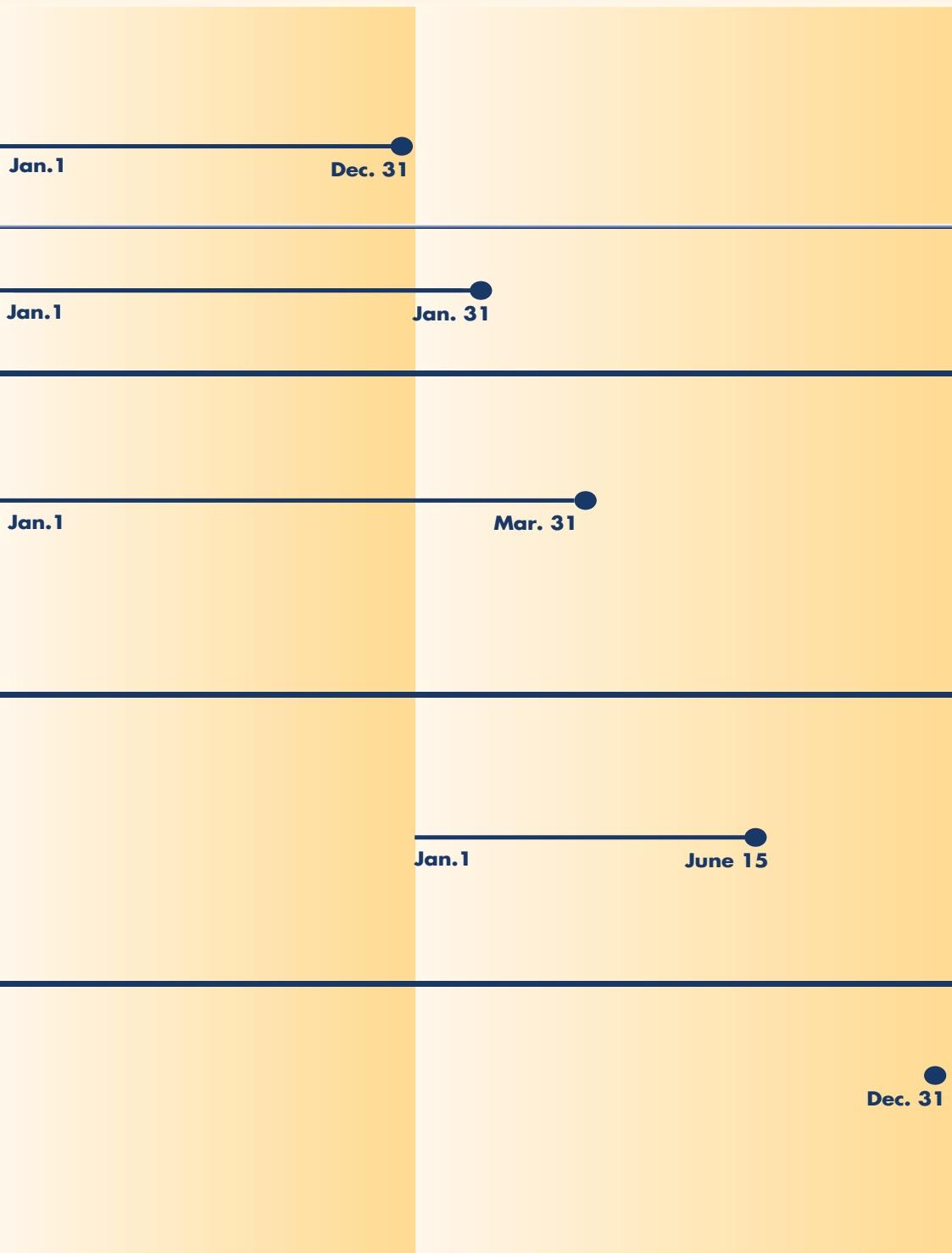
Step	To Do
1	<p>Send forms and fees to NBPTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ application■ nonrefundable initial fee <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ all eligibility forms■ balance of full fee
2	<p>Develop portfolio entries and submit them to NBPTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Receive portfolio box after submitting initial fees.■ Submit all four portfolio entries at once after submitting all fees and eligibility forms.
3	<p>Schedule your assessment center exercises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ after submitting all fees and eligibility forms■ at least 30 days before the test date
4	<p>Obtain your scores online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Access My Profile to learn about your scores and certification status.

Questions? NBPTS Customer
Please call 1-800-22TEACH between 8 a.m. a

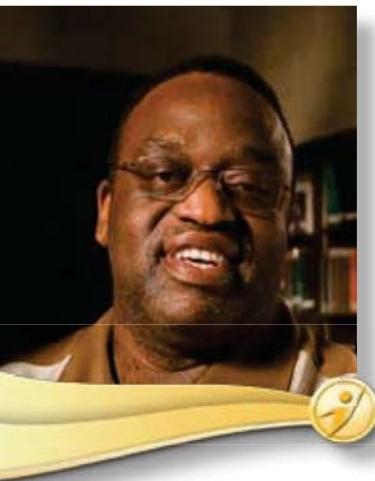
NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION CANDIDATES

Year 1

Year 2



Service is ready to help.
Call 800.223.6382 p.m. (CST), Monday through Friday.



"There's no better and higher validation for the teaching profession than National Board Certification."

— Hubert Willoughby, NBCT
Maryland

- **Low-Interest Loans for Teachers**

National Education Association (NEA) members can apply for low-interest loans to pay their initial and retake candidate fees. For more information, call 1-800-545-4094, or visit the NEA Member Benefits Web site at www.neamb.com/loans/loanbc.jsp. Many education-related credit unions have special programs for teachers pursuing National Board Certification. Contact local credit unions for more information.

- **Local Programs**

Many local businesses and foundations support candidates for National Board Certification. Candidates should check with their local chambers of commerce, PTAs, rotary clubs or school districts.

Q: How Can National Board Certification Contribute to Continuing Education Units?

A: Teachers who have achieved National Board Certification may receive nine graduate credit hours, as recommended by the American Council on Education College Credit Recommendation Service. These credits may be used toward degree program requirements, licensure renewal or salary stipends. Please check local institutions of higher education, school district or state department to determine if this credit is available to you.

Q: What Happens if Candidates Do Not Achieve in Year One?

A: National Board Certification is a rigorous process. Candidates who do not achieve in year one continue with the process by retaking selected portions of their original entries through the NBPTS score banking and retake process. This process includes score banking that allows candidates to save their original scores and take up to two more years to complete selected entries and exercises (at \$350 each) and submit them for scoring. Many candidates who follow this path achieve National Board Certification within this period.



SEVEN STEPS TO CANDIDACY

- 1. Confirm your eligibility.** Teachers and school counselors can become candidates if they meet the following requirements:
 - A baccalaureate degree
 - Three years of teaching experience in early childhood, elementary, middle or secondary schools prior to submitting an application
 - A valid state teaching license, where required, for each of those three yearsCheck the NBPTS Web site for complete eligibility requirements.
- 2. Choose your certificate.** Review the certificate requirements at www.nbpts.org/become_a_candidate/available_certificates1, and read at a glance the assessment that is appropriate for you.
- 3. Review the standards.** Go to www.nbpts.org/the_standards. Review the standards for the certificate area that best reflects your practice.
- 4. Make the commitment.** Decide if National Board Certification is for you and if you are ready to pursue certification.
- 5. Familiarize yourself with your state and local application requirements.** The National Board Certification application deadline is December 31; however, state and local application and financial aid incentive deadlines vary and are typically much earlier. Candidates who seek funding from their states need to check state requirements and confirm with their state program administrators before submitting applications to NBPTS. A list of state deadlines is available at www.nbpts.org/resources/state_local_information.
- 6. Identify financial resources.** Information about subsidy programs, state and local incentives and the National Board Scholarship Program is available at www.nbpts.org/become_a_candidate/fees_financial_support/scholarships. NEA members can also apply for low-interest loans to pay their assessment fees.
- 7. Complete the application.** The application is available at www.nbpts.org/become_a_candidate/apply_now1.

IMPROVE TEACHING QUALITY

Q: **What Is *Take One!*, and How Does It Relate to National Board Certification?**

A: *Take One!* is a program that can be used by licensed teachers as an initial step in becoming a candidate for National Board Certification or as stand-alone professional development by any educator. A participant can prepare and submit one pre-selected video portfolio entry from any of the 25 certificate areas of National Board Certification and later transfer the score if he or she pursues National Board Certification. *Take One!* is available to all teachers as well as induction or pre-service teachers, principals, administrators, college professors and those who support National Board Certification candidates.

Q: **Why *Take One!*?**

A: *Take One!*:

- Provides participants with the opportunity to reflect on their classroom instructional practices within the context of national teaching standards;
- Helps participants plan and achieve specific learning outcomes and adapt their teaching practices to the needs of individual students; and
- Offers participants the opportunity to form professional learning communities with a common language about teaching and learning and a commitment to student improvement and achievement.

"National Board Certified Teachers become your teacher leaders. They set the standards for high-quality practice, and they help develop the rest of your staff. No principal can do the job alone. [NBCTs] are the teachers that help make it happen."

— Craig Benes, Principal
Illinois



ABOUT NBPTS

National Board Certification is administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and non-governmental organization.

NBPTS advances the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching, creating a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards and integrating certified teachers into educational reform efforts.

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1525 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22209
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